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BACCALAUREATE

ANDREW WYLIE, D. D.,

CHAPMAN OF THE LAMAR UNIVERSITY.

ADDRESSED TO THE

SENIOR CLASS

AT THE COMMENCEMENT,

SEPTEMBER, 1848.

IN BLOOMINGTON.

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE "INDIAN TRADER."

1848.



# BACCALAUREATE

BY

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ANDREW WYLIE, D. D.,  
PRESIDENT OF THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY,

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## BACCALAUREATE.

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YOUNG GENTLEMEN: The Social Life of man is a subject which for several years has occupied much of the public attention. At this moment there is more speculation among men of theory, and more earnest thinking among practical men on this subject than on any other. And even the unthinking, who feel the excitement which follows from thought in others, are stirred up, and stand ready for action. Such moving in the public mind is apt to increase when once it has become general, till some actual result, visible to human view, has taken place. If the mountain is in labor, a birth is likely to ensue; though the thing emergent should be but a mouse. For the movement, or rather the tendency to move, creates expectancy; expectancy becomes desire; and desire ends in action.

And now men are every where expecting a new order of things. In Europe they long for it; they demand it; and they will have it before long. That is, they will have something different from that which has been and yet is, but whether better, or worse, depends on—should I undertake to tell you what, I should assume too much, far too much, to myself. For the Problem is a great one,—one, in fact, which, I think, it is not for human wisdom to work out; certainly not for that kind of wisdom which walks in the light of its own fire, and rejoices in the spark of its own kindling, as if it were a sun.

In Europe the People, we see plainly, demand some change in their social life: and, in this country, though there is more contentment among all classes (—as certainly there is abundantly more reason why there should be—) yet there are among us some,—their proportion in numbers relatively to our whole population I have not the means of even guessing at with any degree of confidence,—but some there certainly are, who are restless and dissatisfied with Social Life in these United States, and desirous of something better,—better perhaps than what in the nature of things there can ever be here on this earth.

They are hoping for incompatibilities—repugnances—contradictions.



A homely, certainly a plain, call it, if you will, a coarse instance, will shew clearly what I mean. A good horse is wanted. Now it is really a rare thing to find a good horse—good at all points, and for all uses. And, in fact, such an one is not possible in the nature of things:—in the nature of all possible things I do not say, but in the nature of all *the* things which actually being united make up that noble animal, a horse. Some would not be content with a horse that did not answer equally well in harness, or under the saddle, carrying corn to mill, or running for a prize on the race-course, pulling at the plough, or in the waggon,—single, as in that light affair called a buggy, or in company with five others, in a great Conestoga broad wheeled machine, equal in tonnage to an ancient ship:—but should any good man, in seeking for a horse to be used by all the family, sons and daughters, from the chubby urchin of five years old to the matron herself, both included, I say, should any householder, studious of domestic economy, and aware of this great principle in all economy, that a thing is valuable in proportion to the number of uses to which it may be put, go out into the horse market, expecting to find one which should answer, equally well, all the purposes I have mentioned, and over and above these, one that should excel the best Short-horn-Durham cow in giving milch—the expectation would, I think, by the most of people be considered unreasonable; and why? Because, the nature of horses being considered, things incompatible are looked for.

The wonders which the Physical Sciences have enabled Art to perform in the department of unorganized matter, have produced upon the less intelligent portion of people an influence which bewilders. They are lost in amazement and ready to believe any thing. That news should pass along a wire with the speed of lightning, is a fact, which to them seems full of mystery—a thing stranger than that which, though long sought for, has never yet been found, a *perpetual motion*. They do not know that in the Telegraph there is no incompatibility; but, in the idea of a perpetual motion, there is. So they are not aware that, in the complex problem of Social Life, there are laws of nature to be considered, which are altogether different from those by which the department of unorganized matter is governed. They are, besides this, incapable of those higher efforts of the understanding, which are necessary in tracing out and applying the general truths of science, of those sciences especially, of which organized matter, and its concomitant, Life, are the objects. Nor,



when such truths are explained to them, do they readily apprehend how it is, that, in each particular case, the general truth is found, in its application, to be limited and modified by others with which it is connected.

For instance, the three words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, which the French People sang and shouted with so much enthusiasm, near the close of the last century, and which their children are singing and shouting now, with enthusiasm as great, and more enlightened, let us hope, if properly modified, denote what all men ought to desire should have a place in the Social Life. But, as in the mouths of the mob then, and the mob now, these words stand for things which are incompatible, which never had, nor ever can have existence in any form of Social Life, nor any where, except in the incoherent dreams and disordered fancies of such madmen as those who tried fifty years ago to realize them in France, and force them upon the other nations of Europe. The project failed, not at Waterloo, but all along from the very first bloody step, to that last in the desolating track in which it moved; it failed utterly. Some good resulted, as some good results from all projects; but not enough, one would think, to encourage a repetition of the experiment. Brute force cannot govern, much less renovate. Equality! What equality? In some one thing and not in all things? If not in all things, and to all persons, equality is the very height of *in*-equality, iniquity, injustice. In all things, and to all, do you then say? Well: try it; and see. Your neighbor has a capital of five thousand dollars; and you have none. But you are twenty years old; and he is fifty. He was born thirty years before you. His labor for thirty years has made the difference; and were you allowed to claim the half of his capital, he must be allowed fifteen years of your age. But this, in the nature of things, being impossible, you must both remain as you are; he, with this advantage over you, that he has a capital of five thousand dollars more than you; and you, with the advantage, over him, of thirty years time in the grand capital of life. Could the nature of things be so far changed as to bring the people of each successive generation all at once into existence, so that they all might start even in the career of life, there would be less injustice in an equalization of property among them. Even in that case there would be some injustice, and in some instances much cruelty.

Let us take an instance in which the disparity in question is made, not by time, as in the one just now considered, but by a difference of

conduct. Reckless and Thrifty were born on the same day, and in circumstances perfectly equal. But their conduct was very different. Reckless, even in childhood, was self-willed and ungovernable. He looked only to the present, doing always whatever he liked, regardless of the consequences. He gave a loose rein to all his propensities, and spent his youthful days, and not seldom his nights also, in sports and carousing with his dissolute companions. When grown up to manhood Reckless married, and, by means of his wife's fortune added to the little which remained of his own, contrived to live a few years longer. By the influence of friends he got an office under government. But being unfit for business, the affairs of his office were sadly mismanaged; he was turned out; his gambling and drinking propensities soon completed his ruin; and he died in extreme want, forsaken and despised.—This portrait, by the way, is not imaginary.—Nor is its counterpart—Thrifty.—Thrifty, by pursuing a course in all respects the opposite to that of Reckless, raised himself to competence, honor and usefulness in the world.

Now, Reckless, when poverty came upon him like an armed man, —nor is this part of the sketch imaginary,—was clamorous for equality. But how could equality be produced, but by compelling Thrifty to divide his hard-earned, honestly-acquired competency with the dissolute Reckless? Think of the matter, and you will see, that in this way, and in this way alone, could equality be produced. Let the division be made for once, in despite of justice:—take from Thrifty one half of his property and give it to Reckless, and, their course of conduct continuing as before, the same division must be made again and again. To say nothing of the cruelty and flagrant injustice of such policy, every one must see, at once, that it would go to destroy the vital principle of social life, and reduce to barbarism the nation that should adopt, or permit it.

The Social Life is founded on the right of property, which means simply this, that a man should enjoy a portion of what his labor actually produces. Not the whole of it; for government must have a share; since government is the watch-dog without whose aid a man could enjoy nothing at all of the fruit of his labor. Without government—to carry on the figure—every man must be his own watch-dog, and consequently have no time to labor:—he would have to act as becomes a watch-dog:—and he would turn into a savage wolf at last, prowling through the uncultivated waste for prey—alone or with his kindred gang.

There must be government. Government is as the breath of life to man's social nature. And, though to the ignorant it sounds like a contradiction, man, as a social being, can be free only in being governed. That is the best government which gives to the different powers with which The Blessed and Only Potentate endows each individual, when imparting to him his existence, the most free and perfect scope for exercise. As these powers are exceedingly diversified, so will be their exercise and its result, production, wherever this freedom is enjoyed. One is better fitted by nature for one kind of work, and another for another; and the complex business of social life goes on to the best advantage for all, when each is left to employ the gifts which the Author of nature has bestowed upon him. And it is for society to say what kind of labor shall be encouraged most: and society does say it most emphatically. There is no appeal in the case. The decision being made, all must conform to it. The idea that labor ought to be equally rewarded, estimating it by the hour, is one that never can be realized. It is incompatible with the nature of man, and the conditions of the Social Life. If a law were enacted that the same rate of wages should be paid for mending a broken gate, as for setting a bone; for making fences, as for making laws; for constructing rat-traps, as for building organs; for steering a ferry-boat, as for navigating a frigate; for butchering pigs, as for commanding an army; for laying out roads in the interior, as for making a trigonometrical survey of the coast; such a law would be as foolish as unjust, for it could not be enforced. In the march of life all cannot be foremost. Wherever there is motion there must be precedence. Gradation is Nature's law. Man is not exempt from it, in any condition of his social existence. There is equality in the grave; but nowhere else on earth.

It is for the advantage of all, even for the poor themselves, that capital should be unequally distributed. Were it not for accumulated capital, where would the poor man grind his corn? It is capital that builds the mill. It requires "*a heap*" of money to build a mill. And the water which runs together in a thousand rills to form a stream strong enough to turn the mill; is, in this respect, perfectly analagous to wealth, which naturally accumulates in comparatively few hands, for the purpose of accomplishing great things for the common benefit, and especially for the benefit of the poor.

It is not uncommon to meet with expressions of disapprobation, and even of high indignation, at the extravagant expenditure of wealth in



Great Britain, as manifested in the splendid specimens of architecture and the Fine Arts, so numerous in that country. The magnificence of the churches and cathedrals provokes especial censure. The people of Edinburg have incurred reproach for erecting, at a great expense, a monument to the memory of Sir Walter Scott. And who, I would ask, are the persons employed in the erection of these buildings? The poor. Into whose hands goes all that money which these buildings cost, during the time which is occupied in taking from the quarry the materials, and in constructing them into the mighty fabric? Into the hands of the poor. The honest industrious laborers and their families get the whole of it. And, could there be devised a better method of supplying their wants, than this of expending from the stores of the wealthy, in the shape of wages for work, money which otherwise would not go into circulation at all, or go into it by channels in which the *industrious* poor,—the mason, the carpenter, the painter, the glazier, the smith and the multitude of other mechanics and day-laborers,—would never handle a farthing of it? To support the poor in idleness is not the thing which the poor or the rich should desire for themselves. Nobody should desire to be supported in idleness, unless it be such as are disabled by some calamity, or the weakness of old age, so that they cannot work. Work is the law of Social life. Man was sent into the world to work. Work is vocation. In whatever condition he may be placed, he must labor in it. He must do battle unceasingly against necessity, or be vanquished and led captive by it. Labor is the price he must pay for every thing.

But honest industry deserves its wages. And these ought, in all cases, to be sufficient not only to furnish the means of a comfortable subsistence to the laborer while employed at his toil, but, over and above this, something to lay up for old age, and for relief in case of sickness, or any other of those misfortunes which are common to man. In this country, every man should, besides all this, derive from his labor what may procure him some books, and other means of improving his mind in knowledge and moral culture. For this end some leisure time will be requisite. Without all this it is most manifest that no man can be duly qualified to discharge aright his duties as a citizen. Farther still: It is not right that the laborer should be debarred from the comforts of a family and a home. His wages therefore should be such as to render it prudent for him to marry at the proper age.

To persons possessed of reason and humanity these points need no proof: they are self-evident.

Yet in England, such is the state of things, that multitudes of people cannot, by their labor, procure the necessaries of life. As for its comforts, their ambition aspires not so high as to hope for them. The spectre of famine ever stares them in the face. Last year the Government of England gave about fifty millions of dollars for the relief of the famishing Irish, besides the large donations given by the Queen, the Prince and the Nobility. Liberal contributions were also sent from this country: for the cry of suffering filled the world. One man,—his name deserves to be mentioned,—Abbot Lawrence gave twenty thousand dollars. All this liberality, however, afforded but partial and temporary relief. The source of the evil remains. It is an organic disease, deeply seated in the social state, and such appliances cannot reach it. The seeds of it were long since sown by the bloody hand of War. The British nation had its origin in the strife of arms, and has seldom been at peace for any length of time. What jarring elements have been mixed up in the composition of that wonderful people,—the Celt, the Pict, the Dane, the Saxon, the Norman;—the Papist, the Churchman, the Presbyterian, the Covenanter, the Independent;—the Plantagenet, the Stewart, the Tudor;—the Red Rose and the White—the King against the Nobles and the Nobles against the King and a Democracy against both. Over and over again has the nation from which we sprung been melted and fused in the fierce flames of war. Her present Constitution and fabric of society have been the result. An immense debt has been the result, under the burden of which the Giant groans and staggers.

The interest of this debt is double the amount of the entire expense of our Government. To pay it the labor of the nation has to be taxed. Here is a matter to be pondered by the philanthropist,—to be pondered by us especially. I say that it is the labor of a nation which in all cases pays the taxes of the nation, as it pays for every thing. Labor pays the tax in the shape of reduced wages, and in other ways which need not now be mentioned. And when the labor of a people is overburdened their spirit is crushed and their social life languishes and becomes corrupt.

The truth of this cannot be explained in this place.

Thus, briefly, however, let it be exhibited: Mind, Force, Motion, Work, Products, is the order in which are disposed the things which concern man's Social Life. Mind furnishes and employs the Force,

which sets things in Motion: regulated Motion is Work: Work results in a Product. Taxation attacks this last, and sends back its withering influence through the series, till it reaches Mind. Since the time of Henry VIII, England has had a Mind greater, I think, than that of Rome, when her glory was the brightest. The Mind of England has generated a Force, which has done great things at home and over all the earth. But for this, the weight of her taxes had long ago sunk her in the abyss.

The French have genius inferior to no other people. But whether, as a nation, they have a Mind, may be doubted. Through the volcanic cloud which covers France we discern signs of thought, but what sort of thinking is that which could give rise, for example, to such a Decree, from the Provisional Government, as this: "Considering that the principle of Equality implies a uniformity of costume for citizens appointed to perform the same functions, the Provisional Government decrees: The representatives of the people shall wear a black coat, a white waistcoat with lappels, black-colored pantaloons, and a tri-colored silk scarf, ornamented with gold fringe. They shall attach to the button-hole on the left side of their coats, a red ribbon, on which shall be embroidered the fasces of the Republic."—

The Decree ends thus: "The President will then rise and say 'Representatives of the people, in the name of the Republic, one and indivisible, the National Assembly is definitively constituted. Vive la Republique.'" The Mind of the nation, with ideas in it taken from the milliner shop, mixed up with those of Communism, St. Simonism and "association based upon love"—not without visions of a glory which sorts rather badly with "love"—the mind of the nation, which loves to call itself Great, if indeed such be its mind, will never succeed in the work of regulating itself. It must first understand itself.

A scheme exists in the heads of some people in France, which is not without advocates in this country. The object of this scheme is to make the Public the sole Owner of all real property. And the effect of it would be, that we should have, every year, instead of a scramble for office, which is confined to a few, a universal scramble for the annual revenue of all property. That is to say, our Form, not of government, but of social life, would be entirely changed, and the people would become serfs to those in power. The scheme is mentioned not as a subject of discussion, which it does not deserve, but for the purpose of showing how far the minds of some people



can go in absurdity on such subjects. They think of man as of a piece of inert matter, to be hewn or moulded into whatever shape they please. Man is not *that*. Man is a piece of matter with a Will in it. There may not, in every case, be Mind in it; for mind implies reason: but there is always Will, and, not unfrequently, the less reason, the more will.

Now, the piece of matter in which resides the Will, may be so situated, as to its relations in the Fabric of the social state, as to put something like a force upon the will, determining it to doing what the law condemns: and when this is the case to any considerable extent, there must be in the Fabric of society itself something which needs to be corrected. Why should there be two million of persons in a country who cannot by their labor keep themselves from starving? An Irishman, the father of a family, goes fourteen miles to get labor, works two days, and earns a stone and an half of meal, brings it home untouched and untasted, and falls down dead on the threshold—dead from absolute starvation. In such circumstances how many fathers, may we not suppose, would have been tempted to steal, rob, murder, rather than do as this poor honest man—this heroic sufferer—did for the sake of his children? Can we wonder that such extremity of suffering should drive people to desperation and madness?

There is in the History of Rome by the late Dr. Arnold a paragraph containing remarks so strikingly just, in relation to this subject, that I have thought proper to transcribe them.—“Long periods of general suffering make far less impression on our minds, than the short sharp struggle in which a few distinguished individuals perish; not that we over-estimate the horror and the guilt of times of open bloodshedding, but we are much too patient to the greater misery and greater sin of periods of quiet legalized oppression; of that most deadly of all evils, when law, and even religion herself, are false to their divine origin and purpose, and their voice is no longer the voice of God, but of his enemy. In such cases the evil derives advantage, in a manner, from the very amount of its own enormity. No pen can record, no volume can contain the details of the daily and hourly sufferings of a whole people, endured without intermission, through the whole life of man from the cradle to the grave. The mind itself can scarcely comprehend the wide range of the mischief: how constant poverty and insult, long endured as the natural portion of a degraded caste, bear with them to the sufferers something yet worse than pain, whether of the body or the feelings; how they dull the

understanding and poison the morals; how ignorance and ill-treatment combined are the parents of universal suspicion; how from oppression is produced habitual cowardice, breaking out when occasion offers into merciless cruelty; how slaves become naturally liars; how they, whose condition denies them all noble enjoyments, and to whom looking forward is only despair, plunge themselves, with a brute's recklessness into the lowest sensual pleasures; how the domestic circle itself, the last sanctuary of human virtue, becomes at length corrupted, and in the place of natural affection and parental care, there is to be seen only selfishness and unkindness, and no other anxiety on the part of the parents for their children, than that they may, by fraud or by violence, prey in their turn upon that society which they have found their bitterest enemy. Evils like these, long working in the heart of a nation, render their own cure impossible: a revolution may execute judgment on one generation, and that perhaps the very one which was beginning to see and to repent of its inherited sins; but it cannot restore life to the morally dead; and its ill success, as if in this line of evils no curse should be wanting, is pleaded by other oppressors as a defense of their own iniquity, and a reason for perpetuating it forever."

In this country, blessed with plenty, we can form no conception of the misery of which we hear only in other countries, but see nothing, and have felt nothing all our lives.—In passing, let me suggest an admonition. Would it not be well for us voluntarily to abstain from food sometimes, long enough to make us acquainted with some of the pangs which starvation, in its incipient stages at least, produce in the body of its victim? In the body I say: for as to the horror it must bring upon the mind, no voluntary fasting can reveal to us what it is.

By this means we might better understand what must have been the suffering of the poor Irish, of whom it is computed that no less than a million, during the late tremendous visitation, have perished for want of food. Yet such is the natural productiveness of Ireland, that, under the wretched system of affairs there, the annual exports amount to upwards of \$100,000,000, nearly equal to those of the United States. But this exuberance avails not, because, as already intimated, it is absorbed in taxes, which go to pay the interest of the national debt. This debt, as we have stated, is the effect of wars.

Another cause is the way in which the land has been divided in Ireland. One man, for example, owns the territory in which Belfast is situated, containing sixty thousand inhabitants; others possess

farms of fifteen, ten, five acres; and others of less than an acre. Others own no land at all, and make out to exist by renting, according to the "*con-acre*" system, farms, if they may be so called, of half an acre, or even a perch! But this, also, is an effect, for the cause of which we must go back to the Feudal System. And that, too, had its origin in war. Conceive it thus: Scott and Taylor, and the other leaders of our army lately in Mexico, having, we will suppose, subjugated that country, proceed to divide it among themselves in portions suited to their grade and rank in the army, taking the lion's share, and leaving the common soldier to squabble with the enslaved Mexican for the remainder. Such was the Feudal System, established over Europe, when it fell into the hands of those military chieftains who overturned the Roman Empire. In this system the present governments of Europe had their origin. Under it we see what belongs to the common people. The same that belonged to the common soldier, and which cannot be better expressed than in the words of the definition which your Grammars give of the meaning of the Verb, namely, "*To be, to do, and to suffer.*" Let us hope for them a better portion. They will get it some day,—peaceably if they can, forcibly, if they must. Another cause of the evil, which we are contemplating in the state of things in Ireland, is superstition. A rapid glance at a page in the history of that unfortunate Island, will give you to understand something about this.

Pope Adrian III., who was by birth an Englishman, bestowed upon Henry II., king of England, a right to Ireland. How he, the said Pope, came by this right, you need not now be told; except in this brief way, that it was by means of superstition, a thing which connected itself with the Feudal System in a manner which we in these United States might do well to consider. The sum of it is this. The Feudal Potentates gave their power to the Pope. In virtue of this grant the Pope Adrian III. gave Ireland, as I said, to Henry II. But the Irish people did not like it, that their island should come under the power of Henry: so they made resistance, which proved ineffectual, however, through the traitorous conduct of one of their own Kings, Dermot Mac Morrogh. The case shews a bad trait in the Melesian—I mean the individual, king Dermot Macmorogh. He took a fancy to the wife of one of his neighbor kings; and so, in her husband's absence, carried off the fair lady. Her name was Dovergilda: her husband's name was Ororic. Ororic, enraged at Dermot for such villainy, got Roderic, another of the Irish kings, to help him



to revenge. They accomplished the enterprize, by driving Dermot from his throne and kingdom. So far the story of the revenge goes according to our wishes; but no farther: for Dermot had recourse to Henry II. king of England; and by the help of Richard Strongbow, Earl of Strigal, Robert Fitz Stephens, powerful subjects of Henry, and other adventurers, he raised a force, which, after much fighting with Roderic, Ororic, and their party, reduced them and the whole of Ireland under the power of Henry. These things happened in the last half of the Twelfth century. But Ireland continued still in an unquiet state, torn by dissensions and bloody strife, till 1649. In this year Cromwell quelled its insurgent spirit, by a terrible blow, which struck down many in the silence of death, caused the ears of all who survived to tingle, and transferred four fifths of the land from the former owners to the possession of those who fought under his victorious banner.

This is a slight specimen of the many ills which Superstition has, in the lapse of ages, ever aiming to rule, brought upon that unhappy people.

The Mind of England, acting through Oliver Cromwell, took this way to check the high pretensions of Superstition aspiring to rule by virtue of authority from the Vicar of God. All along since the Reformation, this, indeed, has been its way, till recently it has begun to try another and perhaps a better way, that of conciliation and concession.

To a people in the condition indicated in the foregoing remarks the application of moral influences for the improvement of their character, could such influences be applied, promises but little. You need not preach to a starving man. His empty stomach and his famishing children cry louder than your voice. Had you an angel's tongue you could not win his attention to any thing but bread. Mock not him—mock not his Maker, and yours, by any other offering than of that which will chase away the chills of death from the emaciated, half-clad body. When the hand of Love has done this, you may talk to your poor brother of what concerns the health of his immortal soul. What am I saying? The health of his immortal soul, is not this the very way to restore it? Is not this the very way in which you can best preach to him the blessed Gospel of the grace of God? Look into his immortal soul, and you will see that the disease which has come upon it, is the sullenness of Despair. His energies having been exhausted, in an unavailing struggle with the necessities of his

condition, a condition in which the arrangements, and in some sense the very progress, of society has placed him, he has given himself up to be devoured by, "Hungry Ruin," which has long "had him in the wind;" and now, nothing remains for him but to "curse God and die." Such is his soul's malady. And the "balm" wherewith to heal it, is Charity. Shew him that there is sympathy for him in human hearts—benevolence—not that which says fine words, but that which does good deeds, and is, in fact, beneficence,—not "passing by on the other side," but kindly approaching the sufferer, and taking care of him, and with tenderness, the tenderness of love and pity, ministering to his relief. Shew him thus that there is sympathy for him in human hearts; and of himself, he will begin to think that there is such a thing as "the grace of God"—and a Gospel of good news for the poor. Let him find a brother on earth and he will recognize a Father in Heaven. His thoughts will take a new direction; and, as he looks into himself and reflects upon the past, he will see that it was not because Heaven had no care for him, while Earth hated him, and society cherished a dark and settled purpose of doing him wrong on every hand, and aggravating the wrong by contempt; but because of some misconduct on his part that he was plunged into such an abyss of misery.

In the course of the late trials in Ireland it appeared in evidence, in a certain case, that a very worthy gentleman, while doing every thing in his power for the relief of the suffering poor around him, was waylaid and shot dead by one of them.

Such instances of horrid cruelty and ingratitude do occur. But they are no new thing in the world; and they invalidate not the truth here advanced. For the most deplorable thing in the condition of a degraded population, is *that* in their character which causes them to mistake the character of others with whom they have to do. They regard their best friends as enemies; and implicitly give themselves up to the guidance of such as lead them to ruin. "Crucify! him! crucify him!"—"Not this man, but Barnabas!" are cries, which they often make to men in power—purposes which they often execute themselves. But Divine Benevolence still makes for them the prayer and the apology first uttered on Calvary, and fainting not goes on in her work of regeneration. It is a slow work; the regeneration of a people. Whoever would succeed in it must expect to suffer, among other things, reproaches, and, it may be, violence from those whom he would save. History gives no instance in the past as an exception

to the truth of this remark ; and it is not wise to expect one in the future. Nor should the philanthropist be in the least discouraged at this. Let him look at Nature. Nature, when producing anything great, is neither hasty nor noisy in her work : but Nature ever succeeds, for she never tires, nor gives up her enterprise in despair.

If, “the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number” be the object of the social state, we may justly felicitate ourselves on our happy form of Government ; since it is better adapted to this end than any of the other forms which have hitherto been tried in the experience of nations. But we probably ascribe too much to this cause in the past, and we are certainly in danger of trusting too much to it in the future. We owe much more to the hand of Providence in this matter, than people generally are aware of. It was this which furnished the Field in which our Institutions have been planted, such a field as never before was allotted to any other people for an inheritance. I refer not merely, nor principally, to our ample territory, so ample that we are wont to measure it, not by leagues but by climates and degrees of longitude, and so abounding in the elements of wealth, in its soil, in its minerals, in its streams and broad rivers, that every thing requisite to sustain a mighty population, in the enjoyment of all the comforts and most of the luxuries of life, can be produced and exchanged with the least possible amount of labor,—I refer not to these things, vast in importance though they unquestionably are, but I refer to the newness of the country, and the character of the people who procured it, fairly in most cases, from the Aborigines. In the social state of the continents of the Old world evils derived from remote ages have settled on most of the nations, penetrated their very vitals, and become so inveterate, that their wisest statesmen are unable to devise a cure. In this country there exists but one such evil. Except this one, society, in its progress here, had no other obstacle to remove, but such as rude nature had, in the exuberance of her strength, put in its way. Fire and sword are not the instruments for removing these, but fire and the axe. Hard work of this sort, and much of it, was here to be done. But this may be reckoned, upon the whole, as an advantage. People soon degenerate who have little to do ; and I count it among the advantages of the social state in this new country, that if any one wants work he need not go far to find it, and *that* such as yields an adequate return.

As to the character of the people who colonized this country, which is the second of the causes to which, under God, the prosperity



of this nation is to be attributed, much has been said on public occasions by orators. It affords them a standing theme of eulogy, which is not always discriminating and sometimes extravagant. On such a subject, however, the sternness of criticism must relax, when it is remembered that it is pious in children to think well of their fathers, and that, as with prospects, so with characters, "it is distance that lends enchantment to the view." Whatever else may be said of their faults, the people who founded this nation possessed one noble attribute in a very superior degree, a susceptibility of improvement, a trait which marks whatever on earth is destined to distinction. Individuals differ in nothing so much as in this. One makes rapid progress, till he attains a certain point; there stops, and then, perhaps, falls back again. Another shoots forward, at first not at all, but afterwards, with a rate of motion which increases till the last hour of life. So with a whole people. China has remained for ages stationary: and so have the Asiatic nations generally. So with those in Africa. So with most of the European races since the Reformation. Spain has gone back. Germany has perhaps advanced; and Italy. But France has not. England has unquestionably. Ireland, on the contrary, remains where she was. The colonies of Spain on this continent, it is said, have degenerated greatly. It is no vain boast to say, that this has not been the case with us. Before the Revolution, the people of the then colonies were proceeding steadily, and with wonderful rapidity, in the career of improvement. At that period, they shewed to an admiring world a Washington. Since that period, the United States have not faltered in their onward course. No second Washington has indeed appeared. But I am speaking of social life, not of individuals, and I hesitate not to say, it is better on the whole than it was at the close of the last century. Better, I do not mean, because we have multiplied in numbers, extended our territory, increased our navy and our army, our commerce by sea and land, our manufactures and our agricultural productions; nor yet because, in the Sciences and Literature and in the Fine Arts, we have so far advanced as to enter the lists of competition with England herself.—The well known taunt of the *Edinburg Review*, uttered so late as 1815, could not be uttered now.—But I speak not of these things, but of something nobler, higher, better than these, less visible, but more felt; I speak of things that are not to be counted like dollars, but enjoyed like the light of the sun and the breath of heaven,—not to be measured by cubic feet as you might measure the massive fortifications by which

Louis Philippe thought to render Paris impregnable,—but known as the strong man knows his strength, when he goes forth rejoicing to run his race ;—to be weighed not as the planter weighs his bales of cotton on the wharf, but as the mother weighs in the scales of affection the infant which she cherishes in her bosom. I speak of things, in short, which belong not to the outward state of a people, but to the genius, the spirit, the Mind of a people,—mutual confidence and respect, fraternal affection, concord, deference, candor, courtesy, the spirit of kindness and conciliation, love of order, respect for law; and what results from all these, a sense of safety. These are better to the rich man than his hoarded millions: and they impart to the simple enjoyments of the cottage a dignity and tranquility unknown to kings.

In respect to these things, we have been, so far, proceeding as a people in a course of improvement; and these are *the* things which constitute the social life, or, at any rate, give value to it.

To what are they owing? To character, doubtless. But what forms character? the character of a nation? What formed the character of this nation? Circumstances. The past gives its impulse and impression to the present; the present to the future. There is some truth in this philosophy; but it is not the whole truth. Did circumstances form the character of Lafayette?

What made the Frenchman in character so different from his neighbor the Spaniard; and both so different from the Englishman; and all three still more to differ from the Irishman? I meddle not with physiological speculations. We have to do with moral causes on this occasion; as these concern us most in what we have to do in the course of our individual life: and of these I make no doubt that Christianity was the one, which imparted to the social life of this nation its character.

Consider what Christianity did for those thoughtful, earnest-minded people from whom we are descended.

It gave them a body of Literature, with the Bible at the head of it,—that book of books, book of blessings, replete with lessons of divine wisdom.

It gave them the Sabbath—radiating holy influences. It gave them family discipline, the father, as priest, presiding over the domestic circle, making it a nursery for the young, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It gave them a church, broken, indeed, in the concussion of the

times of the Reformation, but, nevertheless, exerting, in various ways, a moral power, which, on the whole, was pure and salutary.

By these means a sense of accountability to The Moral Governor of the Universe was maintained and kept alive in the public mind. This is that which has preserved the community in a healthful state. When this Sense of accountability to Almighty God shall depart from among us, our glory and our strength will depart with it, the bonds of society will be relaxed; and, though our form of government and our laws may remain, social confidence, social security, social faith, social *life* will be at an end. And individual comfort, so far as affected by social relations, will be no more. And what is there in individual comfort which is not affected by these relations? The thistle in your neighbor's field sends, floating on the breeze, its many seeds, to settle on yours. His distempered horses, herds, flocks, infect yours. Stagnant pools on his premises create miasma dangerous to your health. If his children grow up without moral culture, your children will be seduced by their evil company and example. Is he a drunkard?—But in what remains of this day, were this discourse to go on till darkness should come over the sky, I could not enumerate the many ways in which the interests of each individual are liable to be obstructed, or promoted, by means of his social relations.

When the majority are corrupt, it is in vain to talk of civil liberty, or social life. A corrupt people cannot be free. They must be bound in fetters of despotic rule. They themselves will forge the fetters; and the only question will be who shall wear them: but in fact they shall wear them themselves. For nations there is no retribution in a future state. They are rewarded and punished here. In both cases themselves are the instruments. They forge their own fetters. The fire at which the chains are forged is fire from hell: that which melts and dissolves them is from God's altar.

Let not these truths be forgotten. Their importance increases every year with the increase of our population. The tide of emigration from all quarters of the Old World pours itself incessantly upon our shores. It is composed not of those only who seek refuge among us from the ills and wrongs which oppressed them in their native country: some of them are fugitives from justice—from infamy. Soon, instead of a score of millions there will be an hundred millions in these United States. What shall control such a mass of people, if they shall be led to think that beyond this life they have



nothing to hope or fear? Not any power known to our government, constituted as it now is. Not any power compatible with civil liberty.

Young Gentlemen : I need not tell you what influence these considerations ought to have on your future conduct. I shall only say, in conclusion, that by considering them and acting accordingly, you will best promote the interest of your country. Do your part, then, in improvement of all kinds, especially in the improvement of mind. If you have a good thought, give it out for the benefit of others. Scorn not to engage in any good work, however humble. Improve every thing, on which thought, or tongue, or hand, can act. Countenance nothing which is contrary to honesty and fair-dealing in social life. Above all, and first of all, improve your ownselves. So shall you be the better prepared to act for the general good, in whatever sphere it may please Providence to place you : Commending you to whose keeping, we bid you an affectionate Adieu !

"Lux et Veritas."

NINETEENTH  
ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT  
OF THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY.

Wednesday, September 27, 1848.

ORDER OF EXERCISES:

PRAYER.

*"Human Progress,"*

ORLANDO CLARK, *Vernon, Indiana.*

*Triumphs of Truth,*

R, FULLERTON, *Fayetteville, Tennessee,*

*Aspect of the Age,*

I, W, LOVE, *New Amsterdam, Indiana.*

*Veneration for the Good,*

R, M, OVERSTREET, *Franklin, Indiana.*

*The Practical in Life,*

J, C, THORNTON, *Paoli, Indiana.*

*Reputation,*

W, T, WYLIE, *Eden, Illinois.*

*Baccalaureate and Degrees conferred,*

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*Address to the Class in the Evening,*

BY J. C. VAUGHAN of *Louisville.*







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